



2012 End Of Days



Notes on the Apocalypse (Appendix)

Posted 4.12.09 - 6:17 pm

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Notes on the Apocalypse - Appendix



Article Index - by Pastor David Steele Sr. in 1870



THE NEW JERUSALEM

Interpreters are much divided in opinion as to the import of this symbol. Some think it represents the church on earth during the period of the millennium; while others, no less learned and pious, consider it as an emblematical representation of the heavenly state. Of those who acquiesce in the former view, some consider the arguments "quite conclusive." It may be conceded that much may be advanced, and with great plausibility, in support of this position.

Perhaps the most specious arguments to this purpose are such as the following:—"That the New Jerusalem is distinguished from the Old, because of the superior light and grace of the present dispensation of the Covenant. Moreover, the glowing descriptions of the church militant given by the prophets, especially Isaiah, are thought to be as boldly rhetorical as those of John; yet those lofty flights are confessedly descriptive of the church on earth. Besides, who can conceive how "the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into" the heavenly state? or how are "the leaves of the tree of life for the healing of the nations," when there are no nations to be healed? etc.

To these arguments the following answers may be given.

The church is one under all changes of dispensation, and by what names soever she is called: but it does not appear that we are warranted by Scripture usage to view the New Jerusalem as a designation of the church in her militant state. She is indeed sometimes called in the New Testament by Old Testament names: as when Paul calls her by the name Zion, (Heb. xii. 22.) But he does not say, new Zion. Again, when our Lord promises, (as in Rev. iii. 12,) to reward "him that overcometh," it must be supposed from the connexion, that, as in all similar cases of spiritual conflict, this reward is to be conferred in a future state,—heaven. But part of the reward he describes in these words:—"I will write upon him the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem." Surely it may be supposed without presumption, that in this place New Jerusalem means heaven. Nor is the assumption true,—that the descriptive language of the Old Testament prophets is always to be understood of the church on earth. For instance, can the following language (Is. xxxiii. 24,) be predicated of the saints while in the body:—"The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick?" "The glory and honour of the nations" are the "saints of God, the excellent;" who while here, are "the light of the world, the salt of the earth;" and doubtless nations as well as families and individuals "have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed them for their sakes:" (Gen. xxx. 27; xxxix. 5;)—and that he has also "reproved kings" and destroyed nations for their sakes, (Ps. cv. 14; Is. xliii. 3, 4.) And when all the saints who are to rule the nations, (Rev. xx. 4, 6,) for a thousand years, shall have been brought home to glory, then emphatically will the glory and honour of the nations be brought into the New Jerusalem.

As to the "leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations," it may be remarked, that their sanative virtue will have been experienced by national societies on earth: and there is not, there never was, nor will there ever be, any other healing medicine for them, (Ezek. xlvii. 12) In addition to what has been said, it is worthy of notice that the tree of life, in allusion to the delights of the garden of Eden, which was an emblem of heaven, is mentioned in the Apocalypse, near the beginning and near the end of the book, (chs. ii. 7; xxii. 2.) Now, we are told expressly that this tree is "in the midst of Paradise." But we learn both from our Lord and the apostle Paul that Paradise signifies heaven:—"To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," said Christ to the penitent thief. "I was caught up into Paradise;" that is, "the third heaven," said Paul. Did Christ and Paul mean the visible, or the invisible church militant by the name Paradise? But the tree of life flourishes there, and all the redeemed eat of its fruit. They are where the tree is, the tree is in Paradise, and Paradise is heaven itself: therefore we are warranted to conclude with certainty that New Jerusalem is a symbol of the church triumphant; and, consequently, that those parts of chapters twenty-one and twenty-two, which are of symbolic structure, are descriptive of the heavenly state.



THE ANTICHRIST

This word does not occur in the Apocalypse, [read more](#) ➔



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Heaven



Notes on the Apocalypse (CH22)

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1

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Notes on the Apocalypse - Chapter 22

Article Index - by Pastor David Steele Sr. in 1870

1. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.
2. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
3. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.
4. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.
5. And there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Vs. 1-5.—These verses, being a continuance of the description of the “holy city,” naturally belong to the preceding chapter.—The angel proceeds to show John the source and current from which emanate all heavenly blessings. The allusion is to Ezekiel, xlvii. 1-12; but both he and John call our attention to man’s primeval state, when our first parents dwelt in Eden. This abode of the blessed is beautified and enriched with all the products, delights and attractions which are adapted to the refined senses of holy creatures,—“pleasant to the eyes, and good for food.” It is Paradise restored, by the “doing and dying” of the second Adam. It is also Paradise improved, having not only the “tree of life,” as the first had, but also, in addition, the “water of life.” The “tree of life” was to sinless Adam a symbol and pledge of immortality to himself and all his posterity whom he represented in the Covenant of Works. Now that heaven is procured for all believers by the second Adam, it is emblematically represented to our weak apprehension by directing our attention to the primitive and earthly Paradise. This is repeatedly done in Scripture. The Lord Jesus, before he expired upon the cross, said to the penitent thief,—“To day shall thou be with me in Paradise. (Luke xxiii. 43.) Paul was “caught up” thither, (2 Cor. xii. 4;) and he calls the place “heaven,” (v. 2;) and in this book, (ch. ii. 7,) the Lord promises,—“I will give to him that overcometh to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” The “tree” is an emblem of Christ, (Song ii. 3;) the “river of the water of life” symbolizes the Holy Spirit, (John vii. 38, 39;) for as the Son and the Holy Ghost proceed from the Father, the former by generation, the latter by emanation from eternity,—so “that eternal life which was with the Father” in the person of the Son, and purchased by the Son, is communicated by the Holy Ghost to all the redeemed by regeneration. (2 Cor. iii. 6; Rom. viii. 2.)—Thus, the eternal duration of life in glory “proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb.” On each side of the river “the tree of life” is accessible by the inhabitants; and the fruits of the tree, ripe in all months of the year, and adapted to every taste, each one may “put forth his hand” as he passes, “and take ... and eat, and live for ever.” (Gen. iii. 22.) Or, “the people that are therein” may “sit down under its shadow, and its fruit will be sweet to their taste.”—“The leaves of the tree” are for medicine, being preventive of all disease, so that “the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein are forgiven their iniquities.” (Is. xxxiii. 24.) “There shall be no more curse.” Satan gained entrance into the garden of Eden, and succeeded in entailing the “curse” upon man, and upon beast, and upon the fruits of the ground; but he shall never be loosed again, or emerge from “the lake of fire,” to disturb the repose of that blessed society in heaven, (ch. xxi. 27.)—As the “throne of God and the Lamb” is one, (ch. iii. 21;) so it is remarkable that the distinction of persons is omitted, as though the Father and the Son were but one person. True, Christ said, “I and my Father are one,” (John x. 30;) but he referred to unity of nature and purpose, not of personality; for, in consistency with this, he said also,—“My Father is greater than I;” an assertion which must consist with the former, and which plainly involves personal distinction, (ch. xiv. 28.)—“His name shall be in their foreheads.”—Which of them? We have found Christ’s Father’s name “written in the foreheads” of a hundred and forty-four thousand saints militant, (ch. xiv. 1.) While in conflict, “the world knew them not,” and the adherents of Antichrist “cast out their names as evil,” branding them as heretics; but now they are known to the whole universe, as the covenant property of both the Father and the Son, (ch. iii. 12.)—“Behold, I and the children which God hath given me;” (Heb. ii. 13.) “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me cut of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. ... All mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.” (John xvii. 6, 10.)—There will be no intermission or interruption of service, “no night there,”—no hidings of God’s countenance, no desertions; for “they shall see his face” in the “express image of the Father’s person,” be assured of his love;—“need no candle,” nor any earthly accommodation; “for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever,” in fulness of joy and unalloyed pleasures for evermore. (Ps. xvi. 11.) How different is this heaven from the Mahometan paradise, which, if real, could gratify only carnal and sensual sinners! yet the imaginations of many, and their aspirations too, with the Bible in their hands, are little better than those of Mahometans or pagans. All speculations of heathen philosophers about the “chief good,” or the enjoyments of their imaginary gods, are so gross and brutish as to demonstrate the all-important truth, that “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John iii. 3.) And it is too evident that some modern philosophers are as little acquainted as Nicodemus with the humbling doctrines of the gospel. The society of learned men, making perpetual advance in natural science, especially in astronomy,—would seem to be the highest conception of happiness which too many modern philosophers can reach. They know not some of the elementary teachings of the Holy Scriptures; such as,—“Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;” and that this indispensable preparation for heavenly felicity consists in “the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

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Notes on the Apocalypse - Chapter 21

Article Index - by Pastor David Steele Sr. in 1870

1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.
2. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
3. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.
4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.
5. And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.
6. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely.
7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Vs. 1-7.—It is unquestionable that the phrase “new heavens and a new earth” is to be understood sometimes as descriptive of moral renovation in the world. As the moral change affected by grace in the character of an individual sinner is called a new creation, and is in truth no less, so in respect to a community. The analogy in this case is the same as between a revolution and an earthquake. Thus, we must understand Is. lxx. 17, lxxi. 22, of that great moral change which will characterize the millennium. But the “new heaven and the new earth” are here contrasted with the “first heaven and the first earth which were passed away,” (ch. xx. 11.) The apostle Peter describes the very same grand and glorious change. Mingling the important facts of authentic history with the future facts of prophecy, he tells us that the “heavens and the earth which are now, ... are reserved unto fire.”—He speaks obviously of the visible heavens and earth. These “heavens shall pass away ... and “the earth also, ... shall be burnt up.” He adds,—“We look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (2 Pet. iii. 7, 13.)—“There was no more sea,” no more disorderly passions, animosities, arising from human depravity, to interrupt the delightful harmony and fellowship of saints in glory. It is estimated that about two thirds of this world are occupied by water. In that happy place occupied by the people of God, there is no sea; consequently, “yet there is room,” many mansions, room enough for all the redeemed. “The holy city,” compared to a “bride,” two very incongruous emblems, shows the poverty of symbols, their inadequacy to represent the church triumphant: how then shall created objects furnish suitable emblems of the glorious and glorified Bridegroom? In vision the city seemed to the apostle as if suspended in the air on the same plane with himself; for now he stood neither on “the sand of the sea,” (ch. xiii. 1.) for “there was no more sea,” nor upon the earth, for it was “passed away.” No intervening object could obstruct his view.—He heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them,” as his reconciled and beloved people. As a tender Father, he will “wipe away all tears from their eyes.” “There shall be no more death,” either of themselves or their beloved friends, to open the fountain of tears any more for ever. But death is the last enemy to be destroyed; (1 Cor. xv. 26;) how then can these words apply to any state short of immortality in heaven? “Neither sorrow nor crying,”—for sin or suffering; “neither shall there be any more pain,” causing tears or cries: and what is this but heaven? Yes, “the former things are passed away.” Now “he that hath the bride is the bridegroom,” and she shall never be false to her marriage covenant any more.—“He that sat on the throne,” denotes the Father most frequently in this book, as he is distinguished from the Son; but the Son “is set down with his Father in his throne,” (ch. iii. 21;) and the Son is to be viewed as the person on the throne here, as the following words, compared with the twentieth chapter, verse eleventh, make evident.—He it is who “makes all things new.” He left his disciples as to his bodily presence, and went to “prepare a place for them,” (John xiv. 2;) and now he has come again and received them to himself, in fulfilment of his promise. Having sent the Holy Spirit to create them anew and to carry on to completion their sanctification, he now sees of the travail of his soul, the Father has given him his heart’s desire, and hath not withholden the request of his lips. Now, all his ransomed ones are with him, in answer to his prayer, and also their own prayers, that they may behold his glory which the Father gave him. (Ps. xxi. 2; John xvii. 24; Phil. i. 23.)—The Lord Christ said to John,—“Write: for these words are true and faithful.” And what has sustained the spirits, animated the hopes, and filled with exulting joy, the confessors, witnesses and martyrs of Jesus, but faith’s realizing views of the King in his beauty, and the glories of Immanuel’s land? For this peculiarity the disciples of Christ have been as speckled birds, men wondered at, in all generations.—“It is done,” so he said at the pouring out of the seventh vial, (ch. xvi. 17;) when the final stroke was given to the antichristian enemies: but now these words import the completion of the whole counsel of the will of God, as carried into effect by the Captain of salvation, in bringing the beloved and adopted sons and daughters of the Father home to glory. (Heb. ii. 10.) He who is the “Alpha and Omega,” is the “author and finisher of their faith.”—Although the Lord Jesus has made of sinners “new creatures,” prepared them as “vessels of mercy unto glory,” and introduced them into heaven, they are creatures still, and necessarily dependent. They thirst for refreshment suited to their holy nature; and accordingly he gives of the “fountain of the water of life freely,” for the streams of which they thirsted, “as the heart panteth for the water brooks,” while they sojourned in a dry and parched land, far from their Father’s house. Man’s sin consisted in forsaking this “Fountain of living waters,” and his recovery and felicity must arise from his returning from his own “broken cisterns” to the original spring.—The water of life was purchased at infinite cost by Christ; but he offers it to the thirsty without price, (Is. lxx. 1, 2.)—Those who are refreshed by the streams of the water of life, have many enemies to encounter in their militant state, but all who overcome are encouraged in their warfare by the animating promise, that they shall “inherit all things.” (1 Cor. iii. 21.)—“He shall be my son,” and “if a son, then an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ.”

8. But the fearful and unbelieving, [read more](#) ➔





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